

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently amended) A spacer for holding a number of elongated fuel rods intended to be located in a nuclear plant, ~~said spacer comprising: wherein said [[a]] spacer enclosing a number of cells~~ encloses a plurality of sleeves, each forming a cell having a longitudinal axis and arranged to receive a fuel rod in such a way that the fuel rod extends substantially parallel with the longitudinal axis, each sleeve comprising,

a sheet-shaped material formed into a substantially cylindrical shape, each cell being formed by a sleeve-like member, and

~~each sleeve-like member being manufactured from a sheet-shaped material that is bent to the sleeve-like shape, and wherein~~

the sheet-shaped material comprising a first connection portion in the proximity of a first end and a second connection portion in the proximity of a second end, the first end overlapping the second end, and wherein

the first connection portion and the second connection portion are permanently connected to each other by means of at least one weld joint

~~the sheet-shaped material before said bending has a first connection portion in the proximity of a first end of the sheet-shaped material and a second connection portion in the proximity of a second end of the sheet-shaped material, wherein the first end overlaps the second end of the sleeve-like member after said bending.~~

26. (Canceled)

27. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 26, wherein said weld joint includes a spot weld.

28. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 25, wherein the nuclear plant is arranged to permit re-circulation of a coolant flow and wherein the spacer is arranged to be located in the coolant flow, the spacer including at least one vane for influencing the coolant flow.

29. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 28, wherein said vane is formed by a portion of the material, which extends from the first connection portion.

30. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 28, wherein said vane is inclined in relation to the longitudinal axis.

31. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 25, wherein the sleeve-like member has a material thickness, which is less than about 0.24 mm.

32. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 25, wherein the sleeve-like member has a material thickness, which is less than or equal to about 0.20 mm.

33. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 25, wherein the sleeve-like member has a material thickness, which is less than or equal to about 0.18 mm.

34. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 25, wherein the sleeve-like member has an upper edge and a lower edge.

35. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 25, wherein the sleeve-like member includes a number of ridges, which project inwardly towards the longitudinal axis and extend substantially in parallel with the longitudinal axis for abutment to the fuel rod to be received in the cell.

36. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 34, wherein said ridges extend from the upper edge to the lower edge.

37. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 35, wherein each sleeve-like member includes at least four of said ridges.

38. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 34, wherein the lower edge, seen transversely to the longitudinal axis, has a wave-like shape with wave peaks and wave valleys and that the upper edge, seen transversely to the longitudinal axis, has a wave-like shape with wave peaks and wave valleys.

39. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 38, wherein said wave peaks are aligned with a respective one of said ridges, wherein said wave valleys are located between two adjacent ones of said ridges.

40. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 38, wherein the sleeve-like members abut each other in the spacer along a connection area extending in parallel to the longitudinal axis between one of said wave valleys of the upper edge and one of said wave valleys of the lower edge.

41. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 40, wherein the sleeve-like members are permanently connected to each other by means of weld joints.

42. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 40, wherein said weld joint includes an edged weld at said connection area at least one of the upper edge and the lower edge.

43. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 25, wherein the sleeve-like member seen in the direction of the longitudinal axis has four substantially orthogonal long sides.

44. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 35, wherein each long side includes one of said ridges.

45. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 28, wherein said vane extends outwardly from one of said long sides.

46. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 43, wherein the sleeve-like member seen in the direction of the longitudinal axis has four substantially orthogonal short sides, wherein each short side connects two of said of long sides.

47. (Previously presented) A spacer according to claim 38, wherein each short side includes with a portion of one of said wave valleys of the upper edge and a portion of one said wave valleys of the lower edge .

48. (Currently amended) A fuel unit for a nuclear plant comprising:
a number of elongated fuel rods, and
~~s~~ a number a number of spacers for holding the fuel rods, wherein
the spacers ~~enclosing a number of cells~~ enclose a plurality of sleeves, each forming a cell
having a longitudinal axis and being arranged to receive one of said fuel rods in such a way that
the fuel rod extends in parallel to the longitudinal axis, each sleeve comprising,
a sheet-shaped material formed into a substantially cylindrical shape, each cell being
~~formed by a sleeve like member, and~~
the sheet-shaped material comprising a first connection portion in the proximity of a first
end and a second connection portion in the proximity of a second end, the first end overlapping
the second end, and wherein
the first connection portion and the second connection portion are permanently connected
to each other by means of at least one weld joint
~~substantially each sleeve like member being manufactured from a sheet shaped material bent to~~
~~the sleeve like shape from the sheet shaped material before said bending having a first~~
~~connection portion in the proximity of the a first end of the sheet shaped material and a second~~
~~connection portion in the proximity of a second end of the sheet shaped material, wherein the~~
~~first end overlaps the second end of the sleeve like member after said bending.~~